

**Candidate
Information
Booklet
Trawl**

IRC182972

**Civil Service Pensions, Department of
Finance and Personnel (DFP)**

Staff Officer – Policy and Legislation

**Completed Application Forms
must be returned to HRConnect
no later than 12 noon (UK time)
on *Tuesday 21st May 2013***

Communication between HRConnect and you

HRConnect will issue electronically as many competition communications as possible, you should therefore check your email account to make sure that you don't miss any important communications in relation to this competition. There may, however, still be a necessity to issue some correspondence by hard copy mail.

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BACKGROUND

Civil Service Pensions is a division within Corporate HR, DFP. It administers the provision of pension and early departure compensation benefits and associated pensions for staff in the Northern Ireland Civil Service, its Departments and their Agencies and Non-Departmental Public Bodies. At March 2012, there were approximately 34,000 active members, 26,000 pensioners and 8,500 deferred members in the main pension scheme, the Principal Civil Service Pension Scheme (Northern Ireland). The Division, located in Waterside House in Londonderry, employs 86 staff.

There are 3 branches:

- **Operations** which provides Pensions Administration, Financial Services (including Payroll), Communications and Training and Management Information Systems;
- **Policy and Legislation** which has a dual role – co-coordinating the approach to Pension Reform across the public service, and the policy and legislative changes which apply to the Principal Civil Service Pension Scheme in Northern Ireland; and,
- **Project Team** – dealing with the future service delivery model.

JOB DESCRIPTION

There is currently one full-time post available with Civil Service Pensions.

- Staff Officer - Policy and Legislation

Successful candidates who are not already substantive Staff Officers will be promoted to this grade upon completion of the trial period.

The structure in Policy and Legislation Branch will be reviewed as work on the reform of pensions progresses.

Applications Invited From

Applications are invited from staff in the NICS who meet the essential requirements stipulated in this trawl notice.

Staff that have been advised by their Department in writing that they have been excluded from promotion/selection are excluded from the field of consideration.

Location

This post is currently located in Waterside House, Londonderry.

Salary

The maximum salary payable will be the band maximum of the Staff Officer pay scale. Starting salary will be calculated using the promotion/regrading policy.

Travel

The post will require regular travel to Belfast and occasional travel to GB.

Trial Period

On transfer or promotion as the result of a trawl you will serve 12 months' trial in your new post. This will commence from the date of placement. At the end of the trial period both you and the employing Department or Branch will consider whether the posting should be made permanent.

If the posting is not made permanent, the officer will be transferred back to the former grade/discipline (where applicable) but will remain in their new Department (where applicable). Only where absolutely necessary will the officer be considered for a return to their former Department or, if necessary the wider NICS.

Further Information

Applicants wishing to learn more about the post before deciding to apply may contact:

Blathnaid Smyth by telephone on (external) 02871 310703 or (internal) x 86303 or by email: blathnaid.smyth@dfpni.gov.uk

If you have any questions about the competition process, you should contact HRConnect on 0800 1 300 400 or at nics@hrconnect.gsi.gov.uk.

KEY RESPONSIBILITIES

Staff Officer – Policy and Legislation

The Staff Officer in Policy and Legislation has responsibility for reviewing current and emerging civil service pensions legislation arising out of decisions taken by the Westminster Government and the Northern Ireland Assembly in respect of pensions matters affecting all Northern Ireland public service pensions schemes, with specific responsibility for the Principal Civil Service Pension Scheme (Northern Ireland). A key role for this post is to lead on the initial drafting of all documentation to progress the Public Service Pensions Bill through the Northern Ireland Assembly legislative process. This is an important post in a high profile policy and legislation area that will require the individual to be well organised and motivated with high levels of drive and determination to deliver required documentation to the highest degree of accuracy within extremely challenging timescales.

Key Responsibilities are to:

- Provide leadership and manage staff within a small busy team tasked with progressing legislation, ensuring a strong focus on outcomes;
- Research and comment on draft GB and NI public service pensions legislation and liaison with Departmental Solicitors Office (DSO) and Office of the Legislative Counsel (OLC) and other public service pension scheme representatives;
- Draft and check Explanatory Memoranda;
- Draft and check briefs /submissions for the Minister, NI Executive and other parties;
- Perform research to support the drafting of briefing and policy documents, and make recommendations to senior officers on issues that arise;
- Check draft legislation prepared by EOI;
- Maintain and enhance effective relationships with all wider public service schemes in relation to pension reform and the primary legislation required;
- Contribute to the policy and legislation consultation processes and the drafting/checking of Equality Impact screenings and assessments required; and
- Communicate with all stakeholders, including the business, in preparation for implementation of policy and legislative changes.

ELIGIBILITY CRITERIA

Applicants must, by the closing date for applications have:

1. At least one year's practical experience in the last 5 years of public service pensions.
2. At least one year's practical experience in the last 5 years of contributing to the development and / or implementation of policies through drafting submissions and taking account of relevant legislation.
3. An awareness of the key elements of the current reform of public service pensions.

Shortlisting

In addition applicants should be aware that after the eligibility sift, should it be necessary to shortlist candidates to go forward to interview, the following shortlisting criteria will be applied in order:

1. At least one year's practical experience gained in the last 5 years of contributing to the introduction of changes in legislation.
2. At least one year's practical experience gained in the last 5 years of contributing to communication with key stakeholders, including a Ministerial Private Office to enhance working relationships.

Please note:

It is essential that you clearly demonstrate in your application form how and to what extent (including dates where applicable) you meet each of the essential criteria and if necessary shortlisting criteria for the post. You must provide sufficient details to allow the panel to assess how well you meet these requirements. Only evidence presented against each specific criterion will be considered when deciding eligibility against that criterion. The panel will not 'read across' to relate information provided under one criterion to satisfy the conditions of another. It is not acceptable to provide a list of various posts you have held nor is it sufficient to simply state that you meet the requirements of the criteria. If you do not clearly demonstrate in your application form that you meet all the essential criteria and if necessary, the shortlisting criteria you will not be invited to interview. Only the details provided by you for the eligibility and shortlisting criteria, in Part 3 of your application form will be available to the sift panel.

COMPETITION PROCESS

In addition to satisfying the above eligibility (and if appropriate shortlisting) criteria, applicants will also be expected to demonstrate the following selection criteria/competences at interview.

1. Professional / Knowledge / Technical / Skills

Marks Available: 40 Minimum Standard: 24

2. Strategy / Policy

Marks Available: 20

3. Services

Marks Available: 20

4. Resources

Marks Available: 20

5. People

Marks Available: 20

6. Information and Communication

Marks Available: 20

7. Programme and Project Management

Marks Available: 20

Overall Pass Mark: 96

PERSON SPECIFICATION

CORE COMPETENCES

This post is at Staff Officer level. Further information on the Core Competences can be accessed through the HRConnect portal.

COMPETENCE BASED INTERVIEWS

Selection panels will design questions to test the applicant's knowledge and experience in each of the above areas and award marks accordingly.

INTERVIEW DATES

It is intended that interviews will take place in Waterside House during week commencing 17th June 2013.

SELECTION PROCESS

Making your application:

The application form is designed to ensure that applicants provide the necessary information to determine how they meet the competition requirements and the eligibility/shortlisting criteria.

Guidance for Applicants

- The space available on the application form is the same for all applicants and must not be altered.
- We will not accept CVs, letters, additional pages or any other supplementary material in place of or in addition to completed application forms.
- Applicants must complete the application form in either typescript font size 12, or legible, block capitals using black ink.
- Applicants must not reformat application forms.
- Information in support of your application will not be accepted after the closing date for receipt of applications.
- HRConnect will not examine applications until after the closing deadline.
- Do not use acronyms, complex technical detail etc. Write for the reader who may not know your branch or your job.
- Write down clearly your personal involvement in any experience you quote. Write “I” statements e.g. I planned meetings, I managed a budget, I prepared a presentation. It is how you actually carried out a piece of work that the panel will be interested in.
- The examples you provide should be concise and relevant to the criteria.– This is very important as the examples which you provide may be explored at interview and you may need to be prepared to talk about these in detail if you are invited to interview. It is your *unique* role the panel are interested in, not that of your team or division.
- Where qualifications form part of the eligibility/shortlisting criteria, candidates will be required to provide documentary evidence, if invited to interview.

Application Form Submission

- Please refer to the Candidate Information Booklet before completing an application.
- **All** parts of the application form **must** be completed by the applicant before this application can be considered. Failure to do so may result in disqualification.
- All applications must be received by the advertised closing date. Late applications or applications received by fax or by email will not be accepted. Applicants using Royal Mail should note that 1st class mail does not guarantee next day delivery. It is also the responsibility of the applicant to ensure that sufficient postage has been paid to return the form to

HRConnect. HRConnect will not accept any application where they are asked to pay any shortfall in postage.

- Only the eligibility and shortlisting sections will be made available to the panel (delete as appropriate).
- Applicants are encouraged to submit online applications wherever possible. However, all requests for hard copy application packs are welcomed and all applications will be treated equally regardless of whether they are hard copy or online.
- When completing the online application, your information is saved as you move through the pages. You may leave the application at any time, providing you have clicked on the 'Save & Continue' button. Once your application has been submitted the option to edit will no longer be available.
- Please note - the session timeout for the online application is 40 minutes, if you do not save or change page within this time you will automatically be logged out and any unsaved work will be lost.
- Please do not attempt to reformat application forms as this will result in disqualification.

Interview Guidance

If this is your first experience of a competence-based interview, bear in mind that it does not require you to:

- Talk through previous jobs or appointments from start to finish;
- Provide generalised information as to your background and experience; or
- Provide information that is not specifically relevant to the competence the question is designed to test.

A competence-based interview does however require you to:

- Focus exclusively, in your responses, on your ability to fulfill the competences required for effective performance in the role; and
- Provide specific examples of your experience in relation to the required competence areas.

In preparation for the interview you may wish to think about having a clear structure for each of your examples, such as:

- Situation – briefly outline the situation;
- Task – what was your objective, what were you trying to achieve;
- Action – what did you actually do, what was your unique contribution;
- Result – what happened, what was the outcome, what did you learn.

The panel will ask you to provide specific examples from your past experience in relation to each of the competences. You should therefore come to the interview prepared to discuss in detail a range of examples which best

illustrate your skills and abilities in each competence area. You may draw examples from any area of your work / life experiences.

Further Appointments from This Competition

Where a further position in the NICS is identified during the lifetime of the competition which has the same essential skills and experience, requirements etc. to that outlined in this candidate information booklet, consideration may be given to filling the position from this competition.

Disability Requirements

Any candidate who because of a disability cannot complete the application form in its current format should contact HRConnect.

Order of Merit

The selection panel will assess the information presented by the candidate at interview against each selection criterion. A score will then be allocated against each selection criterion and a total interview score derived accordingly. Those candidates who achieve the overall competition pass mark will be deemed suitable for appointment subject to the number of posts to be filled. HRConnect will then publish the list on the portal and allocate a candidate (or candidates) to the vacancies in merit order. The findings of the competition cease to be valid on the day on which a new competition is advertised or 2 years from the date of publication of the initial list, whichever is earlier.

Feedback

Feedback in respect of eligibility/shortlisting will be communicated automatically to those candidates who fail to satisfy any criteria. All other requests for feedback are welcome.

Completed Application Forms should be sent to the HRConnect Recruitment Team:

HRConnect
PO Box 1090
2nd Floor
The Metro Building
6-9 Donegall Square South
Belfast
BT1 9EX

NOTE: Late Applications or applications received by fax or email will not be accepted.

Contact details:

If you have any queries regarding the competition process please contact HRConnect at the address above or by:

Email: NICS@HRConnect.nigov.net

Tel: 0800 1 300 400

Fax: 028 9024 1665